

that this was going to be nothing but trouble, well, they were willing to throw their friends under the bus and then talk about boots on their throat and wanting to kick some rear ends.

We had a hearing today in our Natural Resources Committee and we had the new Acting Director of Minerals Management Service. We had the new Acting Inspector General of the Department of the Interior, and I was asking that, since we'd had hearings a few years ago on why the price adjustment language was pulled out of the offshore leases in 1998 and 1999—this was a few years ago, the prior Inspector General—the Inspector General said, Well, we can't get to the bottom of why the price adjustment language was pulled out, but clearly, at the time, it had cost our country hundreds of millions—and I'm informed now that that's billions and billions of dollars—that should have gone as revenue from the offshore rigs but has gone into the pockets of some of the big oil companies that executed those lists in 1998–1999. And it turns out, the Inspector General said, But I haven't been able to question the two people with the most information—because they could probably explain this—because they're no longer with the government. And I said, Well, where are they?

They're not with the government.

Well, why can't you call them?

They're not with the government.

When you're talking about hundreds of millions and now billions of dollars, you would think they would want to know their version of what happened. Because if there's billions and billions of dollars that have gone to Big Oil that should have gone in our Federal Treasury because it should have been royalty if these people had not pulled that language out of those leases, then you would figure somebody would want to know if they got something in return for that. What made you pull that language? Because the best we could tell from hearing a few years ago, it appeared they were given information that, Look, the language is not in here on price adjustment. Don't you want that in there? And they never talked to them. They weren't with the government anymore.

Well, it turns out one of the two had gone to work for a company—perhaps you've heard of them—called British Petroleum. Went there in 2001, when the Clinton administration left, and served in different positions; one as director of British Petroleum Shipping Limited in London, vice president for British Petroleum North America in L.A., and also one other position with BP before she came back.

So I asked the Acting Inspector General, Now that we have found out that Ms. Baca is back with the Interior Department, now you surely have asked her why that language was pulled out. What did she say?

Oh, I didn't know she was part of any of that.

And what struck me, and call me cynical, but we found the press release

from Interior, June of 2009. How ironic. That's 10 years after the 1998–1999 leases during the Clinton administration had that language pulled out. Ten years later, she comes out from British Petroleum and goes to work for the Interior Department for Minerals Management. It's really interesting because, well, 10 years. That always rings a bell. Oh, yeah. Unless it's murder, the statute of limitations is normally a maximum of 10 years, unless anything.

So that's probably good news if there was anything that went wrong back there, that was done that shouldn't have been done. Ten years.

So just answer the question. Why did you pull that language out before you went to work for British Petroleum and helped big oil companies make so much money? So that's a matter of concern, continues to be a matter of concern.

I did ask the Acting Director of MMS, since we know that the only entity within Minerals Management that is allowed to be unionized is the offshore inspectors, I asked, Now, we know you're dividing MMS up into three groups, three parts. The prior Director had indicated that she didn't know if they might all unionize or not, didn't really know. So I asked the new Acting Director. He didn't know. That may happen. Now, there's only one little part of MMS that's unionized—the offshore inspectors. Now they may unionize all of those, and they'll have three different agencies to do it with. So that was interesting to find out today.

And when I asked if he thought it was a good idea that a father and son team were the last two inspectors to go out to Deepwater Horizon before the blowout, he said he didn't seem to see anything wrong with it being a father and son. I'm going, This is your check and balance. This is what we were told. This ensures that both inspectors are doing their job, because they know the other is watching them and will report them if they don't do their job. And he didn't have a problem with that being father and son, didn't see that that was a problem.

I'm telling you, Mr. Speaker, when the heads of these agencies don't see a father and son as a problem being the last two inspectors to go to Deepwater Horizon and they are their own checks and balances to make sure that those inspections are properly done, we've got a problem. And it's not British Petroleum. They're one problem, and they need to be dealt with—and should be. Because we've already seen the administration now willing to throw their good friends under the bus. But we do need to clean up this cozy relationship that the President's talked about and that he helped create in the Minerals Management Service.

I yield to my friend from Iowa.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank the gentleman from Texas.

I am standing here thinking that I started down this subject matter, and a

statement that I needed to make was this: I'm looking forward to the interception of the hole in the relief wells that are being drilled down almost 14,000 feet, just going into last weekend when I last went back and checked, so I presume that they are approaching their goal. But it's very difficult to thread that needle and be 4 miles away and hit that. It's a very difficult thing to do. But when they do get it done, when they cap this well off and get the relief well drilled and successfully seal this off, doing what they actually did in 1979 when they had that huge oil spill when they had the blowout in the well off the Yucatan Peninsula down in southern Mexico, when they shut that off, then I expect—and I haven't had a conversation with anybody in BP or anybody that's more knowledgeable than me, but I expect then we will be able to go down with robotics and cut the casing off and recover the blowout preventer. If that can come, if we can bring the blowout preventer up to the surface and then test that BOP, at that point we will at least be able to have a more effective theory on what went wrong. That's what I am interested in more than anything else.

I want the well shut off. I want it cleaned up. But I want to know what went wrong. And the President has frozen and issued an order to stop all drilling offshore for 6 months. Even if we find out what went wrong and find out it was human error, mechanical error, they still seem to be determined that they're going to crush the economy in that part of the country.

The economic damage of oil drifting to shore is a heavy load economically, and environmentally it takes a long time to recover, but also the economic damage of shutting off all of those jobs that are supported by the drilling is a painful thing to watch that kind of judgment from the President of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I acknowledge that we must have run out of time. For that cause, I will be happy to yield back.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KISSELL). Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 9 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

□ 1928

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mrs. KIRKPATRICK of Arizona) at 7 o'clock and 28 minutes p.m.

ADJOURNMENT TO MONDAY, JUNE 21, 2010

Ms. MARKEY of Colorado. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that